



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

OFFICE OF THE STATE EPIDEMIOLOGIST

PO BOX 369

TRENTON, N.J. 08625-0369

www.nj.gov/health

JON S. CORZINE
Governor

FRED M. JACOBS, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

NJDHSS Communicable Disease Service Weekly

Statewide Influenza Activity Summary

Week Ending February 17, 2006

Influenza level of activity: "LOCAL ACTIVITY"

From September 20, 2005, to date 1044 unique clinical specimens have been tested by the New Jersey Public Health and Environmental Laboratory and NJ clinical laboratories participating in the World Health Organization and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System*. What follows is a summary of culture-confirmed cases of influenza identified through testing performed by these laboratories for the week ending February 17, 2006:

- Number of influenza A culture confirmed cases: 44
- Number of influenza B culture confirmed cases: 2

This is the twenty-first week of the 2005-06 influenza season in New Jersey. This week the NJDHSS Communicable Disease Service was not notified of any respiratory outbreak in any of the schools or health care institutions in the state. The outbreak that occurred last week has been contained and most of the students have returned to school.

This week, rates of influenza-like illness (ILI) from nursing homes and emergency department visits are 1.51% and 5.66% respectively. The rate for school absenteeism is 5.53%.

Hospital laboratory surveillance for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) shows a slight decrease in the number of positives. Overall, this week's surveillance parameter remains within the same baseline as compared with the previous week.

A few of the county percentage parameters showed figures well above the total average (see 14Feb.06pdf Table) but should not be interpreted as an increased level of activity since the denominator of reporting entities is very small.

From the analysis of all data collected this week from the ILI surveillance system, the level of influenza activity in the state of New Jersey remains at "LOCAL ACTIVITY". This level of activity is comparable with the same period last season.

According to the CDC's latest influenza weekly activity level report for week 5 (January 29 – February 4, 2006) influenza activity continued approximately at the same level as recent weeks in the United States. The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza was below the baseline level. Nine states and New York City reported widespread influenza activity; 21 states reported regional influenza activity; 13 states including New Jersey and the District of Columbia reported local influenza activity; while 6 states and Puerto Rico reported sporadic influenza activity. For more information go to: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

Influenza virus infection itself is not a clinical or laboratory reportable disease in New Jersey according to N.J.A.C. 8:57-1. Accordingly, activity levels must be extrapolated from weekly monitoring activities of healthcare facilities and providers dispersed around the state.

Avian flu WHO update:

The Ministry of Health in China, has reported the country's 12th laboratory confirmed case of human infection with the H5N1 avian influenza virus. The patient was a 20-year-old female farmer from the south-central province of Hunan. The Ministry of Health in Indonesia also confirmed two cases of human infection with the H5N1 avian influenza virus. Deaths of chickens in the neighborhood were reported four days prior to the patient's onset of symptoms. These newly confirmed cases from both countries were fatal. To date the cumulative number of laboratory-confirmed human cases of avian influenza A/(H5N1) reported to WHO stands at 169 including 91 deaths. WHO reports only laboratory- confirmed cases. For more information go to: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/en/>

*The laboratories conduct testing of pre-season isolates and the first isolates of the season. These isolates can provide information regarding circulating strains and information necessary for the vaccine formulation for the following year's flu season. Also test results from representative samples collected during peak influenza activity late in the season, and after a major influenza outbreak, may identify new variants that are just beginning to circulate in the community, helping to inform vaccine formulations for the following year.

References and Resources:

- To obtain previous ILI reports: <http://nj.gov/health/fluinfo/index.html>
- <http://www.nj.gov/health/flu/preventflu.shtml>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>
- <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/en/>
- <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/>